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4th Combat Camera Squadron (Scott A. Blackhall)

Developing Joint Education for the Total Force

By JOHN B. DRISCOLL

Joint professional military education (JPME) develops leaders, a key ingredient in unifying doctrine, technology, organization, and culture. In early 1998 the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff initiated an effort entitled "Joint Professional Military Education 2010" to update and upgrade JPME. It tackled a number of critical issues. During the first phase, requirements and technology teams confirmed the need for change and existence of available technology to assist in this process. In the second phase, a course of action development team began transitional discussions involving the Chairman,

combatant commanders, and services. Their recommendations underpinned a report to Congress on educating Reserve component officers in joint matters. This article describes how the general outlines of a new JPME system have emerged from these recent actions.

Challenging the Total Force

Today a greater number of Reservists are being deployed to contingencies worldwide. One study found that 4,400 of the duty positions held by Reserve officers in grades O4 to O6 need joint education. Of these, 1,200 need advanced instruction. War plans project requirements for another 2,200 joint duty positions for members of the Reserve components.

Although the demand is increasing, the challenge of providing joint education to Reservists is

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nothing new. Their lack of access to JPME opportunities has drawn attention from Congress. In fact, the Goldwater-Nichols Act specifically directed that:

The Secretary of Defense shall establish personnel policies emphasizing education and experience in joint matters for Reserve officers not on the active duty list. Such policies shall, to the extent practicable for the Reserve components, be similar to the policies [for the active component].

Despite this legislative initiative insufficient advances were made over the last decade. In 1998 the House National Security Committee directed CJCS to report on progress to establish a mid-career JPME course. Citing inadequate preparation of Reservists for joint duty, the committee directed development of educational opportunities similar in content to the resident programs of the Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC) for active duty officers.

This congressional concern is backed by the conclusions of the JPME 2010 requirements team, which found that service participation in joint organizations and operations is now part of the experience of Reserve officers, although JPME is not. This is because the services fill their quotas at AFSC to qualify active duty personnel as joint specialty officers. The result is that Reservists are excluded from the three month course at the college. In addition, Reserve officers are finding that increased operational tempo, service PME requirements, and the demands of their civilian jobs make three-month active duty courses unrealistic. In sum, the opportunity for Reservists to pursue joint education has been declining.

Any education intended for the Reserve components must be presented in a format that can be accomplished during two-week active duty tours and/or weekend drills. A nonresident course which combines distance learning and periodic face-to-face interaction in a group setting is needed in order to replicate the level of joint acculturation and competency achieved in resident programs.

Meanwhile, active component officers assigned to joint billets also face a perplexing set of challenges. They are uprooted from joint assignments for three months of temporary duty to meet joint education requirements at AFSC. In residence they encounter a curriculum with disconnects and redundancies in joint matters taught at service colleges. Also, JPME programs do not fully provide the competency to master the demands of interagency operations.

The three months on temporary duty for JPME by active component officers is particularly contentious. Interviews conducted with students revealed that over half attended AFSC after serving in joint duty positions for a year or more. In addition, long periods away from duty positions increased the strains of operational tempo and detracted from unit readiness. Finally, despite the fact that officers are uprooted to attend educational programs, after action reports indicate that joint headquarters are not sufficiently staffed by officers who have met joint educational requirements.

Another downside of the current system is the lack of appreciation for the growing importance of joint task forces which are employed operationally on all levels. This is best taught by emphasizing JTF doctrine during the primary phase of officer development. In addition, a menu of so-called just-in-time modules could be built on this foundation through various resident, nonresident, distributed, and distance learning techniques. In short, the requirements team confirmed that a seamless, flexible JPME system is needed for officers from pre-commissioning to the general/flag level.

Current joint doctrinal changes and the transition to *Joint Vision 2010* are driving the need for deepened and broadened joint education. The requirements team found in particular that the full array of joint, multinational, and interagency competencies require a "much richer joint educational and training regimen." Emerging joint operational art calls for an effort on a par with staff college education and more intense than the current Joint Combined Staff Officer School at AFSC.

The Next Move

In considering joint education, the course of action team sought the views of the Military Education Coordination Conference (MECC), which includes representatives of each professional military education institution. The initial course of action intentionally did not consider resources. Remaining open to all possibilities dramatically enhanced the dialogue on JPME improvements. After long consideration the phase II team recommended:

- recasting JPME as a set of joint, multinational, and interagency competencies
- reforming joint officer management
- investing in a joint virtual learning environment with a hub for distributed learning and CINC joint learning centers

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**Army Reservist
in Albania during
Shining Hope.**



1st Combat Camera Squadron (Erin Gonzalez)

- creating a two month en route summer school before joint duty tours
- developing a pilot project to test new initiatives
- establishing a joint center of excellence in operational art at AFSC with a resident joint intermediate staff school (JISS) and a resident school for advanced joint education (SAJE)
- developing a robust nonresident JPME capability.

CINCs provided a valuable critique of the approach recommended by the phase II analysis. They supported the addition of multinational and interagency competencies, reform of joint officer management, introduction of advanced distance and virtual learning, and creation of a two-month summer school for officers bound for joint duty positions. Moreover, they conditionally endorsed a pilot project, CINC joint learning centers, and establishing a distance and distributed education hub for joint operational art. However, in contrast with the course of action team and MECC, they favored full joint education taught at each of the service colleges. Neither CINCs nor the MECC team advocated JISS or

SAJE. CINCs were concerned over the competition for faculty, students, and resources. There was a general reluctance to operate another college that keeps officers from duty assignments for another year.

The overlap between military training and education—and the friction between institutional prerogatives and operational imperatives—is a cause of dispute. U.S. Joint Forces Command, for instance, which administers a center of joint operational excellence, objected to designating AFSC as a center of excellence in joint operational art.

All CINCs, however, argued for mandatory, standardized joint education modules across the services, and they wanted to ensure that officers meet similar standards prior to assuming joint assignments. They also wanted flexibility, with joint education modules available to all personnel at all times. As part of a larger curriculum, they supported developing modules that could be used from the joint duty location to provide regional and functional knowledge unique to the duty tour. The vision drawn from CINCs was a system in which individuals might enhance their joint



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Army Reservist in Bosnia, Joint Forge.

knowledge as needed as well as conduct research. Commanders believed that with some changes undertaken by the National Defense University at AFSC, the appropriate content for these modules could be coordinated. They argued that intermediate and senior level colleges should graduate officers who are fully educated in joint matters by providing them with access to accredited joint learning modules. They also wanted officers to complete both phase I and phase II of JPME on one set of orders.

Moreover, CINCs took the report to task on the quality of joint education. Although they believed the JPME 2010 system should complement service education requirements, they insisted that it exceed service standards. They wanted content of joint education to be upgraded to enhance analytical skills, build joint culture, elucidate multinational and interagency competencies, present electives in addition to a concentrated core education, and incorporate a joint task force wargame.

The Pilot Program

The Chairman accepted the notion of full JPME in service colleges and converted the JISS and SAJE proposals to a single 9–10 month joint operations school (JOS). Here, the first priority will have to be developing in-depth faculty expertise in joint operational art and education. CJCS acknowledged that distance and distributed education fails if course content and design are

poor. Competent teachers and curriculum design are essential.

The proposed JOS should free resources. Placing students in 300 seats for three months three times a year at AFSC requires at least 210 officer-years from the military departments. In contrast, a 60 military member JOS student body will cost only 60 officer-years, saving \$12 million annually. Temporary duty and travel funds paid out for 900 servicemembers attending the AFSC short course have exceeded \$5.4 million. If, for example, 650 could complete full JPME while still in their service colleges, the savings in service temporary duty and travel funds would be \$3.9 million.

Based on the potential of distributed education, CJCS responded to a recent congressional inquiry on Reserve component education pointing out that JPME for Reservists was being addressed in the broader modernization of the education process. From now on, according to the *Report to Congress on Reserve Component Joint Professional Military Education*, JPME would integrate the joint military education of Reserve with active duty officers.

[Reserve component] *JPME should enjoy a similar degree of support [as active component JPME] through the proposed [Reserve] pilot program, which will be the catalyst for implementing remote learning for joint staff officers across the total force. . . .*

A distributed learning framework will help develop common distance learning for both active and Reserve component officers.

Senior faculty at AFSC have also developed and tested a joint planning course to respond to the congressional requirement for similar education for Reservists. The two week pilot curriculum consisted of three primary instruction blocks. The first surveyed deliberate and crisis action planning processes and reviewed service and component capabilities. Second came hands-on experience with the joint operations planning and execution system. This familiarized the class with tools to support force deployment. Third, students walked through a crisis deployment exercise, facilitating critical thought and constructive dialogue.

Thirty active and Reserve component personnel in grades E6 to O6 received the joint planning course, completed extensive measurement instruments, and recommended improvements. Both functional and substantive elective modules might eventually be linked through a coordinated educational system to a common core. When greater competency is needed in a specific area, for example, students could devote more time to an appropriate elective module.

faculty at AFSC have developed and tested a joint planning course for Reservists

Based on this experience and CJCS objectives for joint education, AFSC has proposed a course of 110 hours of advanced distributed learning and 130 hours of classroom instruction that Reserve component officers could accomplish during drill weekend and a two week active duty training period. Implementation of this curriculum should begin next summer and, depending on availability of resources, be phased in over the next two years.

JPME 2010 also found that joint education for general/flag officers required updating. The Capstone course at the National Defense University in collaboration with the Joint Warfighting Center (JWFC), an element of U.S. Joint Forces Command, planned and rehearsed a three-day module that puts senior leaders through a JTF life cycle: forming, planning, deploying, employing, transitioning, and redeploying. Capstone course senior fellows and JWFC team members with the support of a state-of-the-art joint training, analysis, and simulation center, conducted the rehearsal. Through this new module, senior leaders discover critical JTF commander issues in each phase of a scenario. The process drives home learning objectives with the use of plenary groups, academic seminars, small group exercises, plenary back briefs, and facilitated discussions. Such efforts are designed to build on competencies being developed in pilot programs, creating a continuum of joint education from the junior officer to senior leadership level.

The Way Ahead

The debate over the course of action proposal, the examination of numerous resource combinations, and the early outline of a pilot program have marked an important transition. It is already clear that the law must be changed to allow AFSC to teach distance and distributed JPME curricula. Similarly, PME standards will have to reflect the central role of distance and distributed education. Resources will come partly from reprogramming manpower and funding, partly from collaborating with the current program centered infrastructure, and additionally from coordinating resident and distance education from the entire system. Implementation will proceed indefinitely and require constant collaboration among services, components, and the joint community at large.

Both distance and distributed learning will increase the quality and quantity of education. The evolution to virtual classrooms, however, will require a concerted effort. To succeed, distance and distributed teaching of JPME 2010 will have to look, resemble, and in fact be better than what is accepted as JPME today.

The naval services have a particular challenge in addressing expanding JPME requirements. The education of 3,100 more officers annually in joint matters requires the Navy to increase staff college and joint operations school attendance. Navy and Marine Corps officers who complete staff colleges must have a joint education in order to match Army and Air Force officers. Virtually linking officers through distributed learning clusters, as well as resident seminars at staff colleges and the joint operations school, is one way to achieve such a balance.

Joint education for noncommissioned officers also must be addressed. Some 2,200 men and women in the grades E7 through E9 support the Chairman, CINCs, and standing JTFs, and more serve in contingency JTFs. They need knowledge about the cultures and capabilities of other services and techniques for mentoring the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen entrusted to them. They also require a better understanding of joint force packaging and joint command and control.

A seamless JPME system must be implemented within the context of a new joint personnel environment. The leaders of joint multinational and interagency military operations will come from a large pool of individuals educated in joint matters rather than from the current intermittent stream of officers and noncommissioned officers.

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